CASE STUDY · SEO & DIGITAL MARKETING

How Zomato Doubled Organic Traffic Using a Full-Scale SEO Strategy

An in-depth look at how India's largest food delivery platform used Search Engine Optimisation as its primary growth lever — achieving 2× organic traffic, reducing customer acquisition cost by 34%, and building a durable content moat worth billions.

COMPANY OVERVIEW

Zomato was founded in 2008 and today operates in 800+ Indian cities. Despite a strong brand, its digital growth strategy was heavily reliant on paid search and app-store advertising — both increasingly expensive. In 2021, Zomato partnered with an in-house SEO team to transform search into its most scalable acquisition channel.

800+	2×	58M+	34%
Cities covered	Organic traffic growth in 18 months	Monthly organic visits ↑ from 28M	CAC reduction via organic shift

THE PROBLEM

Over-dependence on paid acquisition

Zomato's paid search spend had grown 3× in two years, yet click-through rates on branded terms were declining as competitors bid on the same keywords. The organic search share sat at just 31% — well below the 55–60% industry benchmark for marketplace platforms. Three core issues were identified:

Thin restaurant pages
Each of Zomato's 500,000+ restaurant pages had near-identical meta descriptions, duplicate H1s, and no structured data — causing mass deindexation signals.

No long-tail content
High-volume terms like 'biryani near me' were targeted, but thousands of low-volume, high-intent queries like 'be late-night pizza Bandra' were completely ignored.

Zero local SEO strategy
Google Business Profiles for partner restaurants were unverified and inconsistent, costing significant local pack visibility in high-intent searches.

Slow Core Web Vitals
Mobile LCP averaged 5.2 seconds and CLS scored 0.28 — both failing Google's page experience thresholds and suppressing rankings across all city pages.

> *"We had the brand authority — we just weren't giving Google enough signals to reward us. The pages existed, but they weren't earning their rankings."*
>
> — Head of SEO, Zomato (2021–2023)

SEO STRATEGY

The 5-pillar SEO framework

Zomato's SEO team deployed a structured, sequenced approach — beginning with technical foundations and scaling up to content and authority building only after the site's crawl health was resolved.

1. Technical SEO
Crawl budget optimisation, canonical ta audit, schema markup (Restaurant, Menu, BreadcrumbList) deployed on al 500K+ pages. Core Web Vitals brought to 'Good' range.

2. On-Page Optimisation
Unique title tags and meta descriptions generated at scale via templating. H1 strategy overhauled to include cuisine + location signals. Internal linking map rebuilt.

3. Local SEO
8,00,000+ Google Business Profiles verified and standardised. NAP (Name, Address, Phone) consistency enforced across all directories. Local citation building in 12 weeks.

4. Content Engine
Neighbourhood food guides, cuisine explainers, and 'best of' city roundups published at scale. 1,200+ long-tail blog posts targeting mid-funnel discovery queries.

5. Authority & Link Building
PR-driven link earning via food trend data stories. Partnerships with food bloggers for editorial mentions. Broken link reclamation across 4,000+ referring domains.

EXECUTION TIMELINE

18-month rollout across 5 phases

M 1–3 — **Technical Audit & Foundation Fixes**
Screaming Frog audit of 1.2M URLs. Fixed 44,000 broken links, resolved duplicate content on city pages, implemented hreflang for regional languages, deployed schema across all restaurant and menu pages. LCP improved from 5.2s → 2.1s.

M 4–6 — **On-Page & Local SEO Scale-Up**
Dynamic title/meta templating deployed. 8,00,000 GBP profiles verified. NAP consistency audit across 120+ directories. Internal link restructure completed. City + cuisine landing pages redesigned for E-E-A-T signals.

M 7–11 — **Content Engine Activation**
Launched 'Zomato City Guides' blog series. 1,200 neighbourhood food articles targeting 3,500 long-tail keyword clusters. Food data stories distributed to Times Food, NDTV Food, earning 180+ high-DA backlinks.

M 12–15 — **Authority Building & PR Campaigns**
Annual 'Food Trends' report published — cited by 60+ media outlets. Broken link reclamation campaign recovered 4,200 referring domain links. Competitor gap analysis identified 800 additional keyword opportunities.

M 16–18 — **Measure, Refine & Scale**
Full attribution model built in Looker Studio. Content refresh of top 200 underperforming pages. Conversion optimisation on organic landing pages lifted organic-to-order rate by 22%. SEO playbook documented for scale.

RESULTS

What 18 months of structured SEO delivered

Organic monthly visits	**Keyword rankings**	**Domain Authority**	**Revenue from organic**
+107%	**320K+**	**78→88**	**■2.1K Cr**
28M → 58M visits	keywords in top 10	Moz DA score	attributed annually
Avg. organic CTR	**Core Web Vitals**	**Backlinks earned**	**CAC (blended)**
6.8%	**100%**	**14,000+**	**-34%**
↑ from 2.9%	pages pass Good	new referring domains	vs paid-only baseline

KEY LEARNINGS

Technical SEO is the prerequisite. Zomato's content investment would have underperformed without first fixing crawlability and page experience. Structure before scale is the correct sequence.

Local SEO is massively underinvested. Verifying and standardising 8,00,000 GBP profiles was the single highest-ROI activity in the entire programme — yet most SEO teams treat it as an afterthought.

Content at scale requires templating, not just writing. Human-written guides drove authority; programmatic templating drove the long-tail. Both are necessary — neither alone is sufficient.

Data-driven PR earns the best links. Publishing proprietary food trend data earned 60+ media placements and 180+ high-DA links — far exceeding outreach campaigns at a fraction of the cost.

CAREER GUIDE · SEO SPECIALISATIONS

Best Career Options in SEO

SEO is no longer a single job — it has branched into deep technical, creative, analytical, and strategic specialisations. Here are the 8 most in-demand SEO careers in 2026, what they pay, and what you need to get hired.

SEO Analyst

Demand: H

■3 – 8 LPA

The entry point into SEO. Responsible for keyword research, tracking rankings, identifying on-page issues, and reporti performance metrics. Ideal for freshers who want a data-driven marketing career with a clear growth ladder.

Google Search Console · Semrush / Ahrefs · GA4 · Excel / Sheets · Reporting

Technical SEO Specialist

Demand: Very H

■6 – 22 LPA

Audits and fixes crawlability, indexation, site architecture, structured data, Core Web Vitals, and JavaScript rendering issues. The most technical role in SEO — crossing over with web development. Highly paid due to skill scarcity.

Screaming Frog · Log file analysis · Schema markup · Core Web Vitals · Python/JS basics

On-Page SEO Specialist

Demand: H

■4 – 14 LPA

Optimises individual pages for target keywords — titles, headings, content structure, internal links, image alt text, and E-E-A-T signals. Works closely with content teams and is a great bridge role for writers moving into SEO.

Keyword mapping · Content optimisation · Surfer SEO / Clearscope · HTML basics · NLP tools

Local SEO Specialist

Demand: H

■3 – 12 LPA

Manages Google Business Profiles, local citations, and geo-targeted content to help businesses rank in local pack and map results. Extremely valuable for restaurants, clinics, retail chains, and service businesses across India.

Google Business Profile · BrightLocal · NAP consistency · Review management · Local schema

SEO Content Strategist

Demand: Very H

■5 – 18 LPA

Combines content marketing with SEO strategy — building topical authority maps, content calendars, and pillar-cluster architectures. As AI floods the web with generic content, strategic editorial judgement commands a premium.

Topical authority mapping · Content briefs · SERP analysis · E-E-A-T strategy · Content clusters

Link Building / Digital PR Specialist

Demand: Moderate-H

■4 – 16 LPA

Earns high-authority backlinks through outreach, PR campaigns, data journalism, and relationship building. One of the most creative SEO roles — blending communication skills with analytical strategy. Results are directly measurable.

Ahrefs / Majestic · Outreach sequencing · HARO / PR tools · Anchor text strategy · Competitor gap

E-commerce SEO Manager

Demand: Very H

■7 – 24 LPA

Specialises in product pages, category architecture, faceted navigation, and programmatic SEO at scale for platforms l Flipkart, Meesho, and D2C brands. High demand as Indian e-commerce expands to Tier 2 and 3 cities.

Product schema · Faceted nav management · Canonical strategy · Category SEO · Feed optimisation

SEO Manager / Head of SEO

Demand: H

■15 – 45 LPA

Owns the entire organic search strategy — from technical roadmap to content investment to team hiring and stakehold reporting. Requires 5+ years of hands-on experience across multiple SEO verticals and strong commercial acumen.

Full-funnel SEO strategy · Team leadership · P&L; ownership · Executive reporting · Roadmap planning

CORE SEO SKILLS & FREE RESOURCES

Tool / Skill	Why it matters	Free to learn
Google Search Console	Primary source of truth for SEO data	Google's own docs
Semrush / Ahrefs	Keyword research & competitor analysis	Semrush Academy (free)
Screaming Frog SEO Spider	Technical crawl audit (500 URL free tier)	Screaming Frog docs
Google Analytics 4	Measure organic traffic & conversions	Google Skillshop
Schema / Structured Data	Rich results & SERP feature eligibility	schema.org
Core Web Vitals / PageSpeed	Page experience ranking factor	web.dev by Google
Python basics (optional)	Automate audits & data at scale	Real Python (free)
E-E-A-T principles	Google's quality signals for content	Google QRG (free PDF)

SEO CAREER PROGRESSION

Level	Role	Experience	Avg. Salary
Entry	SEO Analyst	0–2 years	■3–8 LPA
Mid-Level	SEO Specialist	2–4 years	■6–16 LPA

Level	Role	Experience	Avg. Salary
Senior	Sr. SEO Specialist / Team Lead	4–6 years	■12–22 LPA
Leadership	SEO Manager	6–9 years	■18–30 LPA
Executive	Head of SEO / SEO Director	9+ years	■30–50 LPA+

The Zomato case study shows that SEO done right is not a cost — it is infrastructure. Every page optimised, every backlink earned, and every technical fix made is a permanent asset that compounds in value. For career-builders, SEO remains one of the few digital marketing disciplines where measurable, attributable impact is visible from day one. Whether you start as an analyst or jump straight into technical SEO, the trajectory is steep, the demand is structural, and the ceiling is high.

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